DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 166 HE 026 964

TITLE	Team Report of the Visit to Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, Missouri: February 15-18, 1992 To Evaluate Progress on the Implementation of the University's Liberal Arts and Science Mission, Effective January 1, 1986.
INSTITUTION	Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, Jefferson City.
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	40p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Programs; *Educational Change; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Institutional Characteristics; *Institutional Mission; Liberal Arts; Long Range Planning; Masters Degrees; *Program Evaluation; Program Termination; Teacher Education; Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS	*Northeast Missouri State University

ABSTRACT

This report presents the findings of a visiting team charged with assessing Northeast Missouri State University's progress in 5 years toward goals from a new institutional mission and planning document. In particular the report endorses the 49 undergraduate programs and 9 graduate programs offered at NMSU each of which successfully attained the goals and objectives established for it in the original plan. The report also provides a comprehensive review of the Master of Arts in Education Program while proposing recommendations for graduate programs. Third the report identified key future challenges related to the academic programs with special emphasis on the core curriculum, active learning, faculties and funding, and assessment. The report concludes with suggestions for institutional enhancement. Overall the team found that NMSU underwent a successful transformation into a nationally competitive liberal arts institution. It has eliminated several programs inappropriate to its new mission, hired faculty with expertise in the liberal arts and sciences, recruited a talented student body, and documented changes in other areas indicative of its changing character. Appended is a separate report on the Master of Arts in Education Program. (Author/JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 364 166

TEAM REPORT

OF THE VISIT

TO

NORTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
Kirksville, Missouri

February 15-18, 1992

for the

MISSOURI COORDINATING BOARD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
Charles J. McClain, Commissioner

to evaluate progress on the implementation

of the university's liberal arts and science mission,

effective January 1, 1986

Russell G. Warren, President
Northeast Missouri State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Northeast Missouri State University

2 TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NE0126 964

REPORT OF THE VISIT

TO

NORTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
Kirksville, Missouri

February 15-18, 1992

for the

MISSOURI COORDINATING BOARD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

to evaluate progress on the implementation of the liberal arts and science mission of Northeast Missouri State University, effective January 1986, as projected in the Five-Year Planning Document (1987)

EVALUATION TEAM

* Michael D. Andrew--Director of Teacher Education, University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire
* Paula P. Brownlee--President, Association of American Colleges, Washington, D.C.
* Anthony S. Caprio--University Provost, Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia (CHAIRPERSON)
* William L. Carlson--Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota
* Jerry G. Gaff--Director, AAC Projects on General Education, Association of American Colleges, Washington, D.C.
* Sue Ann Huseman--Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Maine at Farmington, Farmington, Maine
* Margaret O. Lucas--Dean, College of Creative Arts, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia
* Theodore J. Marchese--Vice President, American Association for Higher Education, Washington, D.C.
* Kathleen F. Slevin--Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Part I. Programs 4

A. Statement of Endorsement 4

B. Master of Arts in Education (MAE) Program 5

C. Graduate Programs: Further Recommendations 6

D. Program Issues, Concerns, and Recommendations 7

* Multicultural Perspectives in the Curriculum 7

* Academic Advising 8

* Curricular Flexibility 8

* Enrollment Management 8

Part II. General Education 9

Part III. Active Learning 14

Part IV. Facilities and Funding 16

A. Space and Equipment Needs 17

B. Funding Sources 19

Part V. Assessment 20

Part VI. Moving Ahead 23

Appendix I. Report on the Master of Arts in Education (MAE) Program 24

TEAM REPORT OF THE VISIT
February, 1992

INTRODUCTION

This report has three primary functions. First, it serves to endorse the forty-nine undergraduate programs and nine graduate programs currently offered at Northeast Missouri State University. Each program has successfully attained the goals and objectives established for it in the original plan. Secondly, it provides a comprehensive review of the Master of Arts in Education Program, while proposing recommendations for graduate programs. Thirdly, this report identifies key future challenges related to the academic programs, with special emphasis on the core curriculum, active learning, facilities and funding, and assessment. The report concludes with suggestions for institutional enhancement.

Northeast Missouri State University has undergone a remarkable and highly successful transformation into a nationally competitive liberal arts institution. It has eliminated several programs inappropriate to its new mission, hired many faculty with expertise in the liberal arts and sciences, recruited a talented student body, and documented changes in a host of areas indicative of its changing character. It is now positioned to move ahead with confidence in achieving its new priorities expressed in the document *A Higher Order of Excellence*. The Visitation Team congratulates the university in its progress and endorses the new vision articulated in *A Higher Order of Excellence*.

I. PROGRAMS

A. Statement of Endorsement

A major responsibility assigned to the Evaluation Team was to study the academic programs of Northeast Missouri State University as presented in the *Five-Year Planning Document* and the *Institutional Review of the Five-Year Plan* and to determine the extent to which each program has successfully attained the goals and objectives established for it in the original plan as well as the extent to which each satisfies the Coordinating Board's program approval criteria.

All of the programs contained and described in the *Institutional Review of the Five Year Plan: 1987-1988 Through 1991-1992* at the undergraduate and graduate levels are recommended for approval to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. These programs meet the requirements outlined in *New Academic Programs Review Policies and Procedures*, Section II, pages 13-17 (MoCBHE, October 1989).

Forty-nine (49) undergraduate programs and nine (9) graduate programs are now offered in 28 disciplines. Programs recommended for approval are the following:

DIVISION OF BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTANCY
- Accountancy (MAc)
- Accounting (BS)
- Business Administration: Finance (BA/BS)
- Business Administration: Management (BA/BS)
- Business Administration: Marketing (BA/BS)

DIVISION OF EDUCATION
- Master of Arts in Education (MAE)

DIVISION OF FINE ARTS
- Art (BA)
- Art: Studio Arts (BFA)
- Art: Visual Communication (BFA)
- Music: General with emphases (BA)
- Music: Liberal Arts (BA)

DIVISION OF FINE ARTS *(continued)*
- Music: Performance (BM)
- Music (MA)
- Theatre (BA)

DIVISION OF HUMAN POTENTIAL AND PERFORMANCE
- Communication Disorders (BA/BS)
- Communication Disorders (MA)
- Exercise Science (BS)
- Health (BS)
- Nursing (BSN)

DIVISION OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
- Communication: Journalism (BA)
- Communication: Speech (BA)
- English (BA/BS)
- English (MA)
- French (BA)
- German (BA)
- Spanish (BA)

DIVISION OF MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE
- Computer Science (BS)
- Mathematics (BA/BS)
- Mathematics (MA)

DIVISION OF SCIENCE
- Agricultural Science: Agricultural Economics (BS)
- Agricultural Science: Agronomy (BS)
- Agricultural Science: Animal Science (BS)
- Agricultural Science: Equine Science (BS)
- Biology (BA/BS)
- Biology (MS)
- Chemistry (BS)
- Physics (BS)

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
- Counseling (MA)
- Economics (BA/BS)
- History (BA/BS)
- History (MA)
- Justice Systems (BS)
- Philosophy and Religion (BA)
- Political Science (BA/BS)
- Psychology (BA/BS)
- Sociology/Anthropology (BA/BS)

B. Master of Arts in Education (MAE) Program

A summary review of the MAE program is included as Appendix I to this report.

C. Graduate Programs: Further Recommendations

In addition to the MAE review, the following questions are presented in order to initiate campus-wide discussion about certain aspects and implications of the graduate programs. These questions must be addressed to resolve the current lack of focus and rationale for existing graduate programs. We recommend a comprehensive program review of all graduate programs in three years.

* What are the goals and mission of each program?
* Can each of the master's programs attract a critical mass of students? What is the desirable critical mass? Specific strategies should be developed to ensure a reasonable number of qualified degree candidates in each program.
* What are the relationships between the graduate programs and the undergraduate mission of the institution? For example, in what ways do these programs enhance and in what ways do they detract from the undergraduate programs? In what way(s) are they "stand alone" programs that reflect and serve specific needs in the stace?
* A comprehensive examination of the relationships between the various graduate programs and the MAE is in order. Examples of issues in need of resolution: To what degree are graduate offerings in some areas driven by the MAE program and should this be the case? Should some limited number of disciplinary emphases be identified for the MAE program? Might graduate students study an additional liberal arts field rather than augmenting their knowledge in the area of their undergraduate majors?

D. Program Issues, Concerns, and Recommendations

In addition, the team identified the following key issues essential to institutional and programmatic improvement.

* *Multicultural Perspectives in the Curriculum.* It is clear that the current curriculum falls short of providing adequate opportunities for students to experience other cultures and other perspectives on the human condition. Some individual efforts have been made to introduce such approaches. However well-intentioned such efforts are, they fall short of what can reasonably be expected from an institution whose mission is liberal learning in all its dimensions. The need now is for more comprehensive and integrative attention. The curriculum should reflect a breadth of multicultural issues and perspectives thereby ensuring that all students are exposed to diversity of thought. Such perspectives, apart from their obvious intellectual rationale, also serve to validate the importance and authenticity of students' own voices and cultural backgrounds.

  It is critical that endeavors in this area be organized and coordinated. A campus-wide approach will encourage the university community to make the necessary connections between curricular and cocurricular activities. There is a need to encourage and provide opportunities for faculty development in this area and to reward faculty who engage in such activities. There are many resources at the national level that support faculty in their efforts to re-think their teaching from a multicultural perspective. We recommend that these be utilized.

* *Academic Advising.* The effectiveness and delivery of curricular programs are affected by the advising procedures as well as the perception of advising support services. The visiting team heard much discontent from students and faculty about the quality of academic advising at Northeast. Concerns expressed ranged from the confusion of both students and faculty about the complicated general education curriculum to issues of numbers of majors advised by faculty. While the institution has begun to address some advising concerns through a FIPSE grant, there is need for concerted attention for improvement in academic advising.

* *Curricular Flexibility.* The institution needs to rationalize and simplify general education and major requirements (including number and sequence) so that neither consumes an inordinate proportion of the students' total credits toward graduation. Students need to have the possibility to explore curricular interests beyond what is required, to pursue a second major or minor that may respond to their intellectual interests and provide further depth in their liberal arts study within the "normal" four year period.

* *Enrollment Management.* Now that institutional targets (caps) for enrollment are established, there is a need to address the question of enrollments (both minimums and maximums) for individual programs. A comprehensive enrollment management program needs to be developed. It would appear that some programs still need to attract a "critical mass" of students in order to

realize the goal of an intellectual community of peers while other programs have exceeded enrollment goals to the degree that faculty feel stretched in their efforts to meet major and general education needs. This effort will involve developing creative admissions/recruitment strategies for "under-enrolled" programs, including the recruitment of talented students who have not yet chosen a major.

II. GENERAL EDUCATION: The Core Curriculum

The Northeast goal that undergirds the core curriculum is stated in the following way:

> *To offer a strong and cohesive liberal arts and sciences core curriculum that provides each student, regardless of intended specialization, with the foundation and breadth of knowledge appropriate to a liberal arts and science education.*

The team spent a good deal of time discussing this goal and assessing the university's current practice in light of it.

In one sense the curriculum has served Northeast well and provided all students with a breadth of study in the liberal arts and sciences disciplines that is the foundation of their education. Especially when seen as an expression of the needs of the time when the mission was re-defined and so many attendant changes were required, the curriculum has worked for both the students and the institution.

In another sense, the curriculum falls short of the standards in the goal. That is, it is not a "core" curriculum (if one means by that elusive phrase common learning rather than a distribution scheme); it is not "cohesive" as there is little evidence of formal attempts to make connections among various components; and, to the extent that these

limitations exist, it is not "strong." These concerns are certainly not limited to Northeast but are common to other liberal arts colleges, including highly regarded ones. Indeed, deficiencies such as these are propelling curriculum reforms on many campuses today.

But in a more fundamental sense, the curriculum is a transitional one. It has served well during the first five years of the new mission, but with the increasing maturity of Northeast, we believe that it is time to build on the experiences of the past and to confidently develop a stronger, more coherent curriculum. This view is consistent with the Review Team Report, October, 1990, which stated: "The campus is ready, we believe, to advance to the next level of sophistication about the core and the liberal arts and sciences." The university is evolving into a stronger institution in many ways, and it is to be expected that the curriculum will evolve, too.

The team has heard, read, and observed many problems with the current general education curriculum. Goals do not seem to be the operational guide of the curriculum. This is especially surprising since learning goals and their assessment is so pervasive in all other aspects of the university. Until the faculty decide what a Northeast graduate should know and be able to do, it is impossible to design the curriculum in a rational way or to assess the success of the university's efforts. Northeast Missouri State University seems poised to take the next step toward greater intentionality and coherence in the education of every student. The university should seize the moment and proceed with a real sense of urgency.

Several other problems related to the "core" came to our attention, and they can be briefly enumerated.

* Criteria for deciding which courses should be included in the general education program or how they should be taught are lacking.
* It is not clear that the courses are designed to serve the purposes of the non-major student or the student undecided about a major.
* Most courses appear to be pitched to an introductory level, and except for the advanced writing course, little advanced study or study in depth is expected.
* Students and faculty expressed concern that general education is too large, limiting opportunities for students to take double majors or to explore majors (except with the penalty of taking five years to graduate). Others said it was too structured, too complicated for students (or faculty) to understand, or too traditionally structured. It is not for us to say whether any of these views are correct, but we do note the presence of a good deal of confusion and dissatisfaction with the present arrangement.
* We heard reports from students that general education courses were not taught as enthusiastically or actively as those in their majors, which may be indicative of a lack of faculty commitment and/or a lack of creativity in the design of core courses.
* There is a notable lack of curricular efforts to link courses, to integrate ideas, or to make connections between various courses. This is the case despite rhetoric that talks of holistic and cohesive education.

* Since nearly half of the faculty have been hired since the new curriculum was implemented, there appears to be a lack of understanding of the rationale and commitment to the current curriculum.
* A loose curricular structure is most defensible if it is aided by a strong advising system to assist students in defining their own educational goals and in selecting their courses intentionally to achieve those goals. However, we have observed considerable evidence that advising is weak. The findings from the student survey were driven home by one student who lamented that she had had seven advisers and was forced to spend five years to graduate.

All of these reasons lead us to urge the faculty, administration, and student body to work together to develop a general education curriculum based on an explicit set of shared educational principles. We view this as the number one priority for the future academic agenda.

Even as we make this recommendation, we note that we found evidence that some students in some classes do integrate ideas around important themes, issues, or problems. Further, some faculty do cultivate synthesis and integration in some courses. And some curricular components, such as the splendid capstone courses, do intentionally foster connected learning. Clearly many students are having wonderful learning experiences. We think, however, that all students deserve to have the benefit of connected learning. In a quality liberal arts institution, the opportunity for students to bring their knowledge from diverse areas to bear on complex multidisciplinary issues or problems should not be left to an accident of fate. It should be offered to all.

Indeed, we were heartened to see the makings of a significant next step in a number of our conversations. Those faculty members who are stressing integrative study, as discussed above, are in a strong position to provide institutional leadership for this aspect of general education. Similarly, we noted groups of faculty experimenting with various approaches that may lead to a comprehensive new general education curriculum. Possible directions for next steps can be seen in the following.

Freshman Week to a freshman year experience

Writing across the curriculum

Computing

Multiculturalism

Integration--paired courses

Active learning

Independent study

Collaborative study

Liberal arts orientation

The point is not that the curriculum should embrace any of these elements in particular. It is that there are groups of faculty members experimenting with promising new approaches that could be the building blocks of a new curriculum. Much of genuine value is going on across the campus, but institutionally it is fragmented. Joint leadership from the administration and the faculty can build on the grass roots work that has been done to cooperatively develop a comprehensive vision for general education at Northeast. Much ground work has been done by the faculty core study groups, and it is time to pull together many of these creative ideas into a viable package. In the words of one national report, the "faculty as a whole should take responsibility of the curriculum as a

whole," and the administration and students should assist. Success seems to be within your grasp.

What seems to be needed is an institutional will to take the next step. This involves establishing some explicit goals, common expectations, specific criteria for courses, and shared commitment to a course of study. It is not an easy road, but it is the road to further educational excellence and greater stature for Northeast Missouri State University.

III. ACTIVE LEARNING

Northeast espouses a mode of education known as "active learning." The expression is used consistently through its planning documents and curricular and cocurricular materials. The visiting team has been asked to discern to what degree the university's students experience "learning communities" and the extent to which faculty and staff evoke active rather than passive participation. The long term goal for the graduates of the university is that they will possess "the requisite knowledge and skills for a lifetime of continued learning and informed decision making" (*Institutional Review of the Five-Year Plan*, p. 131). Active learning is presumed to develop lifetime habits of mind and activity.

The team believes that active learning is a noteworthy goal. It is ambitious and admirable that a university of over 6,000 individuals would aim to transform a traditionally-taught curriculum and an array of cocurricular activities into a set of student-focused and -engaged programs.

Active learning presumes small communities of discourse. The team notes the success of Northeast in reducing class size. This is

significant and important. The students we questioned nearly all recognized that they were at a university committed to active learning and seemed to expect it. As a consequence, some were critical of classes which were "merely lectures." They appreciated the faculty's widespread commitment to their learning. When questioned concerning their understanding of the idea of "learning communities," most were puzzled. Further discussion elicited a few examples--informal student study groups (apparently widespread) and undergraduate research opportunities in science. The goal of promoting participatory learning seemed remote to the students.

In sum, students were extremely enthusiastic and appreciative of active learning, when it occurred. They seemed less aware of the overarching intention than the university might hope.

At Northeast, there is a rich array of opportunities available for students to be actively involved in learning. One group of students volunteered that maybe half the students consciously availed themselves of such opportunities. Whether or not this figure is near the actual participation rate, Northeast does need to develop its thinking from <u>offering to</u> to <u>engagement with</u> its students.

Thus, is each student enrolled at Northeast experiencing, often and well, this type of learning? The university can move beyond pride in the exceptional engagement of a small percentage to participation by all. For example: if, in any major, a few seniors engage in laboratory research projects with faculty, what is the parallel experience for the remaining seniors? These questions imply the need for a structured approach and an organizational framework that supports, integrates, and develops learning/teaching strategies at Northeast.

The team believes that many of the campus facilities, built in the past with a very different instructional mode in mind, are not suitable to accommodate present expectations for many discussion sections. Welcoming space is very important in building communities, especially within a large student body. At least one well-designed (though very crowded) space was seen in the nursing facilities, where faculty offices are clustered around two student-and-faculty-gathering spaces with shelves of books, computer terminals, and a coffee pot!

The concept of the residential college is excellent, especially on a relatively large campus. Northeast may want to consider further development of intellectual or thematic focuses, such as "living/learning" programs. It appears that a fine foundation has been laid with a few residential college courses and live-in faculty members. The availability of faculty members to Northeast students is deeply appreciated and noted by many students.

Again, the team was deeply impressed by the goals and the commitment of faculty and staff to the engagement of students in their own learning. The challenge now is to extend the plan and continually emphasize the goal. Furthermore, it will be important to develop strategies and tactics to ensure that a high percentage of students will have multiple and varied learning experiences in which dialogue is profound and real. It is only because Northeast has already done so much and has such fine faculty members and students that the team challenges the university to move ahead in this exciting and challenging responsibility.

IV. FACILITIES AND FUNDING

It is clear from the Northeast *Institutional Review of the Five-Year Plan* that the university's desire and commitment to "bring living and

learning facilities to a level of excellence commensurate with the teaching, learning and living expectations and demands of the students and faculty" (p. 133) have not been realized during this past five-year period. The needs in the areas of technology, classroom space, and residential living have been clearly documented and capital budget requests prepared in support of the need to refurbish and reconfigure existing campus space. Unfortunately, the necessary state funding support has not been forthcoming.

A. Space and Equipment Needs

There is no lack of dramatic examples to underscore the crucial need for physical plant maintenance and refurbishment. Team members observed large lecture-style classrooms with fixed seating being used for discussion classes of twenty students, a small third floor space with a high ceiling echoing to the sounds of students trying to make oral presentations in a speech course, and buckets positioned to catch the drips from a leaky roof. While creative solutions have occasionally been found to recapture space at modest cost (an art gallery in an old gymnasium in Ophelia Parrish, for example), there is an immediate need for funds not only to refurbish and reconfigure existing spaces but to prevent the current physical plant from deteriorating due to inadequate maintenance. There are roofs to be repaired and restrooms to be cleaned, but funding and staffing are inadequate. If the university can move ahead quickly, the current physical plant (dramatically and creatively reconfigured) may be adequate to serve its evolving needs; if not, the need for maintaining, improving, and reshaping current space may be supplanted by a need to build entirely new structures at much greater cost to the institution and the state.

In addition to classroom spaces, there is a need for meeting spaces for study groups, student organizations, and learning communities. There is also a need for faculty office space to replace current spaces such as temporary offices within former classroom space or modest office space shared by several faculty members; both these arrangements make private conferencing and counseling difficult at best.

The existing facilities pose additional serious problems. The university, in general, is not handicap accessible. There are few elevators to second and third floor class and meeting rooms and some of the existing elevators were designed for freight delivery, not human traffic. Moreover, the current physical plant contains potential health and safety hazards. The theatre costume shop, for example, is located in the basement of Baldwin Hall in a space with exposed pipes (which appear to be insulated with asbestos) and inadequate lighting and ventilation. The black-box theatre is located in the same building just above the boiler room with the result that the floor in this area is uncomfortably warm. Both these spaces are instructional spaces.

The high-quality students and faculty currently being successfully recruited by the university and the long-time faculty who have helped to achieve its new mission, deserve and require learning spaces, conference spaces, and working spaces that support and enhance their efforts. In many cases, faculty and students require updated equipment and state-of-the-art technology to pursue their teaching and learning.

There are many different areas of need related to equipment and technology. These include, among others, widespread needs for up-grading and increased availability of computer technology; specific needs for

better media equipment for the communications program, a state-of-the-art language lab, and more adequate space for theatre and music performances.

It should be noted that in at least one case, that of physics, the technical equipment that is in place is unusable because of vibration problems in the building in which the program and equipment are housed. Moreover, there is currently no replacement plan for computers or other instrumentation and technology.

Despite the documentation of specific needs, square footage requirements, and individual ideas for refurbishment, it would still appear that the institution lacks a comprehensive, creative, long-range campus master plan. We recommend that a committee with broad campus representation be formed to draw up such a plan; it should serve to encourage and inspire the campus community and to reflect a vision of the campus as a physical space beautifully and appropriately designed to support and enhance the liberal arts mission of the university. Finally, it is absolutely essential that the state and the institution together find ways to provide the resources necessary to guarantee that these plans and dreams will be realized. In a very real way, the mission of the institution depends on it.

B. Funding Sources

It is essential that the university somehow identify the resources necessary to respond to the equipment and facilities needs outlined above. Given the unlikelihood of additional state funding in the near future, it would appear that the university must develop alternate strategies for meeting these needs. These may include increases in student tuition and in development efforts, in addition to other strategies.

V. ASSESSMENT

The university achieved national prominence in the early and mid-eighties because of its "value added" approach to assessment. The effort was commendable in every way: it focused attention on outcomes and contribution to student learning; it resulted in significant curricular changes; it created a climate of accountability that paved the way for state acceptance of the mission change. Today, the impressive data in the "red book" (*Institutional Review of the Five-Year Plan: 1987-1988 Through 1991-1992*) offer a valuable, yearly report card on broad issues of institutional and student performance.

While the use of standardized instruments remains the centerpiece of assessment at Northeast, other approaches have been introduced as complements, notably portfolio analysis, a writing exam, and capstone experiences, each to apparent positive effect. However, the visiting team noted from its interviews a number of circumstances that raised questions about the present centerpiece status of standardized testing at Northeast:

* Assessment entails the "systematic collection, analysis, and use of information about student learning." We saw far more "systematic collection" of data than evidence of "analysis and use." Reams of centrally generated data land on the desks of divisional and program chairs, for example, but it is not typical to find that data routinely engaged by faculty and used for change.
* The important debates we were exposed to on campus--about general education, advising, and active learning, for example--typically proceed without reference to findings from university

testing. Anecdotes--with all their power and fallibility--remain a favored tool of discourse.

* Feedback to students--a criterion for the goodness of any assessment step--remains weak from such testing, a fact that diminishes its value in student eyes. Test results, unfortunately, seldom connect with the advisement of individual students.
* Enough students report doing the sophomore-level tests quickly and with low motivation so that the validity of reported change data comes into question. It could be argued that university data on ACT gain scores (*Institutional Review*, pp. 31-2) significantly understate the learning that occurs here.
* The practice of administering tests annually to every freshman, sophomore, and senior--of generating data that has no client, of answering questions that no one asks today--tends to discredit assessment as an enterprise on campus.

"Value-added testing is what brought us to the dance," the team was reminded, and there is no call here for its abandonment. Indeed, its constant, longitudinal character is a long-term strength. The very fullness of the program should not be beyond review, however. Need every step of testing be repeated every year? Which steps meet "show me" tests of need, usefulness, and cost-effectiveness? Some principle of parsimony seems ready for application to the effort.

If data from standardized testing are to realize their fullest potential, the use of that data by top administrators should be clear to all, indeed modeled for faculty. Habits of "preference for data" may be especially important for the administration to cultivate given its new

interest in TQM (Total Quality Management)--a management approach that insists on decisions grounded in data, not mere anecdote.

It is encouraging to witness assessment findings playing a role in the work of university councils discussing active learning, general education, and advisement. The Assessment Committee is now recommending a new round of interviews, transcript analysis, and an "assignment inventory" to assist in the review of general education, and it is rewriting surveys to focus on the "Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." That Committee might also want to consider for itself the model of Richard Light's Harvard Assessment Seminars, through which faculty participants frame the questions, analyze the findings, and bring recommendations into practice.

With all these new steps beyond standardized testing, it will be important that findings be used and effort rewarded, so that a culture of faculty-initiated inquiry into matters of student learning finds a solid home at Northeast.

Finally, the spirit of this section should be seen as complementary to the values expressed in the university's new priorities document, *A Higher Order of Excellence*. That is, principles of assessment and "Total Quality" would become fused in a new, institution-wide emphasis on continuous quality improvement reaching to every corner of the campus, academic and administrative. This combined sensibility would emphasize high expectations for all services, a commitment to continuous improvement, the analysis of processes and functions (not just outcomes), collaborative teamwork and responsibility-taking, and public information systems built around agreed-upon goals.

VI. MOVING AHEAD

We congratulate Northeast Missouri State University on its progress in creating a quality liberal arts institution, and we support the institution in its on-going efforts to create a campus learning community with a shared set of values, plans, procedures, and principles. Creating greater coherence for the campus as a learning community requires a multifaceted approach. We conclude by offering additional suggestions for institutional enhancement:

* *Achieving Diversity*. The university needs to work as a community to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure diversity. This would include the development of a university Affirmative Action Plan; a plan for the recruitment of minority students, faculty, and staff; strategies for increasing minority student retention; the creation of a campus climate that endorses and celebrates diversity.
* *Creating Community*. A liberal arts environment is a caring community where there are systematic efforts to nurture every student's growth and well-being. This includes spaces that invite sharing and interaction, faculty and staff who are prepared to serve as advisers and advocates, and curricular and cocurricular programming that reflects and values the heritage and contributions of all members of the campus community.

The institution must establish priorities so that faculty can focus their talents and energies in ways that enhance the institutional mission and the development of a coherent learning community while still growing as scholars/learners in their own right.

APPENDIX I

REPORT ON THE

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION
(MAE)

-- A NEWLY DESIGNED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL WHICH IS BASED ON A LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND REPLACES THE FORMER BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION DEGREE PROGRAM

Northeast
Missouri
State
University

APPENDIX I

REPORT ON THE MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION (MAE)

This report will review the Master of Arts in Education program, evaluate the accomplishments of the goals for the five year plan, analyze the effectiveness of resources, and make recommendations for strengthening the program. Information in preparing this report came from the various documents made available to the committee plus on site observations and interviews with the following: program secretaries, certification analyst, Division Head, eleven full-time faculty, students in all phases of the program, program conveners (the program advisory council), Division Heads from eight other university divisions and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Part I: The Master of Arts in Education (MAE) Program

The MAE program planned and implemented at Northeast Missouri State University is well thought out, innovative and at the forefront of current efforts to restructure teacher education nationally. The integrated undergraduate-graduate structure leading to licensure at the master's level is in line with recommendations from the National Holmes Group, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education.

A striking fact is that this innovative and well thought out program has been developed and successfully implemented in such a short period of time. The Education Division has undergone radical changes, and in a relatively short period of time has in place a totally new program, with the commitment of the entire faculty and staff. The end result would be enviable in even the most idealistic models of planned change. In this

case, the mandate for change came from the outside. There was no opportunity to build a consensus for change among the faculty. Nonetheless there was a positive effort from everywhere within the University to build quickly an innovative program that would respond to the mandate presented to the faculty.

In this climate of forced change a positive faculty attitude and collaborative change effort is hard to imagine. It is to the great credit of faculty, staff, and university administration at all levels that such an effort has been so successful. Particular credit belongs to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Division Head in Education for their dedication to positive change.

A major strength of the program is that education courses are taught almost entirely by full-time faculty assigned to the Division of Education. These faculty members are housed close to each other and are in constant dialogue about the program. This, along with the program advisory council ("Program Conveners") and active program leadership produces an environment of constant dialogue about the program. These factors cannot be overemphasized as vital to the healthy state of the existing program and to the future of the program.

The size of the program (14 full-time faculty) is also an important strength as it allows effective communication and a sense of community.

Another critical factor for program success is the program support staff. In the case of NMSU, this support team is outstanding. There is also a strong sense of University commitment to the MAE program.

In the environment described above, the MAE program should grow and flourish. As a natural outcome, program components will be adjusted and changed. For this reason it is of less importance to focus on current

program components that may need adjustment because the ingredients and environment for change are in place. Nonetheless, a few specific observations of the program will be identified as suggestions of focus for program faculty:

1) New plans for the early experience course for undergraduates may prove too complicated to work well in practice. Faculty need to rethink the purpose of this course and plan an experience that has sufficient depth and coherence to give students a meaningful experience and provide faculty with evidence of fitness for teaching.

2) The desirability of full-year internships needs to be carefully examined. If such internships are seen as desirable, steps need to be taken to make full-year internships more accessible. Currently there are a number of circumstances operating to effectively eliminate the full-year option for many students.

3) Of more general concern for the program is the availability of appropriate graduate offerings to fulfill the twelve credit concentration required for secondary school candidates. Divisions with small or no graduate offerings are finding it difficult to make appropriate courses accessible to MAE students. Students seeking certification in health, business, accounting, drama, journalism, foreign language, physics and chemistry will find it difficult or impossible to find appropriate and available courses in these areas. The divisions involved will find it difficult and costly to develop and offer appropriate and available courses for the very small numbers of students who will appear in these areas.

This situation needs to be immediately addressed by modifications or accommodations in the MAE program. Among possible solutions the following might be considered:

1) Combine the offerings in foreign language to include integrated courses in language, language pedagogy and linguistics. Students might also be well advised to take one or more courses in the graduate program in English. The present focus for the concentration in foreign language is too narrow to be either practical or in the best spirit of Liberal Arts education described in the institutional mission.
2) In a similar way, students in the sciences might be advised to pursue a broad concentration of courses in the history and philosophy of science, math and technology, or important courses at the upper undergraduate levels in their discipline that could be pursued for graduate credit.
3) Students in journalism and drama should be advised to pursue a broad and integrative concentration in areas of language, communications, and fine arts.
4) In the areas of business/accounting and health/physical education, there needs to be discussion of the interest in and viability of graduate concentrations in these areas.

In general, a more flexible and interdisciplinary approach to the graduate concentration must be considered to meet the needs of students and to provide an efficient use of resources. If adjustments cannot be made, students should be advised to pursue all or part of their concentration at other institutions and waiver of the six credit graduate transfer rule should be considered. Students should be clearly advised

of the availability of graduate courses and, if necessary, the need to seek appropriate courses elsewhere.

Other alternatives would include making a concentration in education available to secondary students or eliminating program options in certain areas.

Program Faculty and Students

In both of these essential areas the program is strong. Faculty are focused on service to students, teaching, and program improvement. Teaching is clearly the dominant mission of the faculty.

The students interviewed were most impressive. They were bright, articulate, confident, and pleasant. They all had a positive attitude toward both their undergraduate education and the MAE.

Part II: Accomplishment of Goals

Goals for Incoming Students

Goal I: To recruit high ability graduate students with demonstrated potential to succeed in rigorous post-baccalaureate programs.

The MAE program has succeeded admirably in accomplishing this goal. The evidence provided in the Institutional Review, from interviews with students and in testimony from Division Heads all corroborate this conclusion. The MAE Program is attracting some of the best students at NMSU. The average grade-point average indicates that they are clearly being drawn from the top half of the university's population. The GRE scores indicate that they would probably also be in the top 10% of candidates for teaching nationally with regard to academic ability. They are also in the top half of all graduate students nationally.

While this goal seems relatively easy to accomplish since a program can set academic standards at any level it wishes, the charge at NMSU represents a significant departure from past practice. In this regard it is commendable that the university has been able to attract a significant number of outstanding students to the program in Education. This represents a shift in the population normally attracted to programs in teaching and requires communication of an outstanding program designed for outstanding students. The challenge of the future will be to solidify the reputation of the program in order to continue to attract the best and brightest.

The program will also have to continue to identify the various interpersonal skills and dispositions relevant to excellence in teaching and seek valid ways to assess these in their incoming students. Dispositions for good teaching while controversial and difficult to define, need to be identified and evidence needs to be gathered for the admission process. Recruitment efforts must also mention these qualities in addition to more objective indicators of academic ability. Evaluation of potential for teaching may require more systematic evidence from some actual teaching experience and from letters of recommendation which specifically refer to identified qualities, skills and dispositions for good teaching.

Goal II: To attract outstanding graduate students with baccalaureate degrees from other institutions of higher learning, students from outside Missouri and students from other countries.

This goal has not yet been met. Although half of the eight candidates admitted in 1988-1989 had undergraduate degrees from other institutions, this was unusual. In 1989-1990, one of 13 students had an

undergraduate degree from another institution. In 1990-1991, all 57 students had undergraduate degrees from NMSU.

It will be very difficult in the MAE Program to reach this goal without some significant changes. The most significant problem is beyond the control of NMSU. It is the long list of courses prescribed by the State of Missouri for teacher certification. These requirements include 15 courses for elementary teachers, eight for secondary teachers, and 14 courses for special education teachers. This kind of intrusion into the process of teacher preparation is representative of what is being widely criticized, (e.g., Goodlad, 1990, *Teachers for Our Nations Schools*) as wrongheaded policy by many states. It is a serious obstacle to improving the quality of our nation's teachers. Until the state of Missouri moves out of the process of dictating the specifics of teacher education programs and shifts to requiring accountability for the products of teacher education programs (through licensing procedures) it will be difficult for NMSU or any other state institution to attract students from other states.

There may be room for compromise by providing waivers for individual courses on the basis of evidence of equivalent or closely related course work or experience. Such a process should be pursued with the State of Missouri for both undergraduates at NMSU and for students recruited from outside the state.

The above mentioned obstacle not withstanding, the MAE program can make some efforts to attract students from other institutions. A brochure making available a post-BA entry into the MAE program would be of assistance. Provisions should be made to accommodate such students and a small number of program spaces could be reserved for such students.

Goal III: To limit graduate enrollment to modest but adequate numbers to insure intellectual interaction.

The MAE program is currently grappling with the issue of optimal program size. Student demand for a teacher preparation program at a state liberal arts institution is high. Predictably 10-20% of undergraduate students will have serious interest in pursuing such a program. Questions of resource allocation within the university, student demand, regional demand for teachers, effective faculty size, availability of suitable clinical sites, effective class size, and critical mass for specialized subject area graduate courses all enter into decisions on appropriate program enrollment.

Current plans and policies seem appropriate in this time of rapid growth and implementation. Approximately 100-120 graduates a year seems an appropriate balance of all factors. This target will result in additional staffing needs (see Part III: Resources).

Goals for Program Graduates

Goal I: To graduate master's degree students who possess appropriate depth of knowledge in a specific discipline.

This goal is clearly met. The undergraduate majors designed at NMSU are clearly on a par with majors at leading institutions in the country with regard to depth. Preparation is clearly appropriate for secondary education candidates. Elementary candidates are insured of sufficient depth in fields related to their teaching by the combination of state certification requirements, the education core courses, and preparation in a major. It is appropriate to allow elementary candidates to major in any discipline related to the elementary school curriculum or child. A major in the core discipline of the elementary curriculum (English, math, science, social science) should be encouraged but not mandated.

Goal II: To graduate master's degree students who will be qualified for entry into doctoral programs at leading universities.

While entry into doctoral programs is not the primary goal of the MAE program (it is to produce outstanding classroom teachers), graduates of the MAE, will be suitably prepared to enter doctoral programs in education and in many of the subject field areas at the secondary level. The high academic standards for admission to the MAE, the strong undergraduate preparation at NMSU, as well as the MAE program itself, will make graduates competitive for leading Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs.

Goal III: To graduate master's degree students who will be able to perform in appropriate professional and academic positions.

It is already clear that MAE program graduates will be successful in obtaining teaching jobs. The success rate exceeds that of teacher education program graduates nationally. Due to the rigorous nature of the program and commitment required of students, this success in job entry will surely continue. Evidence at similar institutions bolsters this conclusion.

Curriculum Goals for Graduating Professional Education Students

Goal I: To graduate Master of Arts in Education students who possess appropriate depth of knowledge in a specific discipline and in mastery of teaching.

Depth in subject matter has been appropriately addressed.

Mastery of teaching, at least in the context of the internship, is being adequately addressed by the program. Although often separated by great distances from interns, university supervisors seem to be in close touch with their interns, visit them regularly, and provide support by various means. Students seem well prepared by a series of courses which prepare them for the relatively full-time responsibilities of internship.

Goal II: To graduate Master of Arts in Education students who will be able to perform at the professional level of master teacher.

To date the only evidence of success in meeting this goal is that students are successfully getting teaching jobs. It will be necessary to develop a systematic follow-up and assessment plan to specifically seek evidence of accomplishment of this goal. Such a plan will require either assessment of performance of graduates by their supervisors or on-site visits or both. Self reports by questionnaire will also be helpful.

Goal III: To offer a select number of excellent graduate programs that (a) grow naturally out of the philosophy, values, content, and desired outcomes of a liberal arts and science institution, and (b) prepare students for entry into doctoral programs at leading universities or for exemplary professional service.

Both the design and implementation of the MAE program seems to have admirably met this goal.

Goal IV: To offer a graduate professional education program that grows naturally out of the philosophy, values, content and desired outcomes of undergraduate liberal arts and sciences education to prepare master teachers.

The MAE program seems to be a natural extension of, and compliment to, the liberal arts tradition.

Goals for Faculty

Goal I: To employ faculty members highly qualified in their disciplines who simultaneously endorse liberal learning and possess great potential for teaching and scholarship.

Qualifications of faculty in the Division of Education are appropriate. Several have been at NMSU for a number of years and have lived through a significant shift from a BSE program which was part of the undergraduate curriculum to a MAE program more separate from undergraduate education. Nonetheless, the connection of the new program to the liberal arts tradition seems stronger than for the former BSE program. If

communication with liberal colleagues is promoted in some systematic way, the endorsement for liberal learning should continue to improve.

Goal II: To recruit and retain faculty who are exemplary in achieving success in teaching, scholarship, recognized research, institutional, and public service within each discipline.

The faculty of the Division of Education, in particular the full-time faculty for the MAE program, seem to have a commitment to the program and institution that suggests a high retention rate. Two recent recruitments appear to be excellent choices, particularly for building stronger ties to local communities and a strong internship program.

The focus of the faculty is clearly on students and teaching. Public service contributions are strong. Recognizing research and scholarships has not been a primary focus for most of the faculty. The potential for success is evident. To realize this part of the goal, a careful plan of action will be required. Such a plan will probably need to foster some collaborative research on issues of common concern (the MAE program, public school issues growing out of local school environments, the development of teachers, etc.). There will also be a need to limit by some means the time currently required for intern supervision driving and to provide more faculty support for research (additional secretarial help, graduate assistants, travel allowances, and personal computers). Research and scholarship need to be made worthwhile, supported, and rewarded.

Goal III: To foster and encourage intellectual interaction with students.

There seems to be a close intellectual relationship of faculty and students. This will be substantially increased as faculty begin monitoring the final research component of the MAE program. While this will be

a time consuming process that will eventually have to be recognized in total work load definitions, it should prove to be a stimulating intellectual experience for faculty and students.

Academic Support Resources

Goal I: To provide library access, services and holdings that support faculty and students scholarship and research.

Response to recent faculty requests for library services and holdings has been excellent. Faculty need to be encouraged to more actively review current holdings and make requests. The system seems to be responsive.

Goal II: To provide adequate computer support to faculty and students.

Computer support seems to be proceeding well. A student facility for the MAE program is well organized and growing. More space and equipment may soon be necessary. Efforts are being made to provide personal computers to faculty. These efforts are commendable. Support should be made available to faculty needing assistance in computer uses.

Part III: Effectiveness of Resources

The resource issue for the MAE program is mixed and changing. The high quality of personnel supporting the MAE has already been addressed. However, as the rapid increase in MAE students continues to an expected level of 100-120 graduates per year within the next three years, there will be a critical need for resources to staff MAE courses. The problem will not extend to other Divisions since the increased numbers will serve to make more acceptable numbers of students in graduate courses in those divisions.

Faculty in the MAE are already fully loaded. The student load will be nearly doubled over the next three years. Plans need to be made for this expansion. The possibility of some part-time staff for intern supervisors may need to be explored. Addition of at least one new position in the Division will be necessary within two years (in addition to replacing two impending retirements). A second position will be necessary within three years. The equivalent of three to five full-time faculty will be needed simply to supervise the additional number of interns predicted for 1995. A careful projection of needs and corresponding commitment of resources will be required for full and successful implementation of the MAE.

Buildings

Violette Hall facilities for the preparation for teachers generally provide a pleasant, supportive and appropriate academic environment. However, as enrollments increase over the next three years, more space in that building will have to be allocated for the MAE program. Consolidated housing of the MAE program and faculty is critical to program success.

Other Resources Needs

The graduate student population (and tuition) from the MAE program will soon be over half of the entire graduate population of NMSU.

There is only one Graduate Teaching/Research Assistant (GTRA) in the Division of Education. This is clearly an uneven and unfair distribution of resources. While one might assume that GTRA awards are not necessary to attract students into such a large program, there are clearly many deserving and needy students and a need for support services in the Division of Education. This unbalance should be addressed.

Needless to say, the current budget constraints will hopefully be eased, the freeze on equipment purchases will be rescinded, and funding promised for restructuring the programs at NMSU will be forthcoming.

Part IV: Recommendations for Strengthening the Continued Implementation of the MAE Program

In addition to recommendations made in Parts I-III of this report, two recommendations might assist the implementation of the MAE:

1) *Develop more flexibility and choice for students.* The relatively heavy requirement for core courses, coupled with the large number of state-prescribed courses for certification and the very rigorous subject major requirements create a tightly prescribed curriculum for students interested in the MAE program. Such a prescriptive curriculum seems somewhat antithetical to the goals of liberal education. Some reduction in required core courses, majors, and state-prescribed courses would seem in the best interest of both students and the goals of the institution.

2) *Advising of students interested in the MAE.* Students are confused about the complexity of requirements, admission to, and completion of the MAE program. One further step in efforts to improve advising might be to invite all freshman who indicate an interest in education on their application to come to a large group information meeting (or meetings) designed to provide early information to students. Such a program could be organized by the individual who provides program advice to MAE students. Students would receive lists of requirements, explanation of program, and program brochures. Opportunities exist for video presentations and small group meetings with current graduate students. A regular schedule of group advising meetings might also prove helpful.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *